



# Nursing Student Attitudes toward Euthanasia: A Cross-Sectional Study

**Kazem Hosseinzadeh**

Social Determinants of Health Research Center, Qazvin University of Medical Sciences, Qazvin, Iran

**Hossein Rafiei**

Student Research Center, School Of Nursing and Midwifery, Qazvin University of Medical Sciences, Qazvin, Iran

## Abstract

**Background:** Euthanasia is among the most common and controversial end-of-life care issues. Examining the attitudes of nursing students to this issue is important because they may well encounter these issues during the course of their clinical placements.

**Research aims:** This study aims to examine the attitudes of a sample of Iranian nursing students towards euthanasia.

**Research design:** This is a descriptive cross-sectional study.

**Participants and research context:** Using convenience sampling, 382 Muslim nursing students were enrolled in this study.

**Methods:** Data were collected using a demographic variables checklist and a self-administered questionnaire that included a definition of euthanasia and 11 closed questions that sought to record participants' level of agreement with euthanasia based on a Likert scale.

**Ethical consideration:** Consent for participation was implicit, indicated by the participants having returned the completed questionnaires. Participants were assured that their data would remain anonymous, be kept confidential and be stored safely.

**Findings:** Of the 382 participants, 61.5% were female, and the remainder were male. The mean age was  $62.6 \pm 14.1$  years (range: 32–91 years). In total, 34.2%, 41.6% and 24% of students reported a negative, neutral and positive attitude to euthanasia, respectively. Most students with clinical experience, and 38.5% of students with no clinical experience, indicated their agreement with active euthanasia.

**Discussion:** There are a number of misconceptions among Iranian Muslim nursing students regarding the definition of euthanasia. Nonetheless, most students exhibit positive attitudes to euthanasia consistent with their clinical experiences.

**Conclusion:** It is recommended to explore the factors that induced nursing students' tendency to euthanasia.

## Keywords

Developing countries, euthanasia, Iran, legislation, Muslim countries, nursing

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**Corresponding author:** Kazem Hosseinzadeh, Social Determinants of Health Research Center, Qazvin University of Medical Sciences, Qazvin, Iran.

Email: khz@qums.ac.ir